

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 14-19 and 23-24 are pending. Claims 1, 3, 14 and 16 have been amended. The amendment is supported by paragraphs [0031] to [0033] of the specification. No new matter has been presented.

Claims 1-6 and 14-19 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi in view of Nara and Sasaki. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, specifies that the states of the information processing apparatuses in the shared folder management table are updated based on (1) present states of the information processing apparatuses determined from the information about shared folders stored in the shared folder management table and (2) result of a comparison between shared folders of a present search with those of a last search. By way of illustration, when a shared folder that was previously registered in the shared folder management table is no longer found by a present search, the information processing apparatus checks the power state of the personal computer having the shared folder in the shared folder management table. The information processing apparatus then updates the power state of the personal computer having the shared folder to ON if the present power state of the personal computer is set to OFF. See para. [0032]. Similarly, if a shared folder that was not previously registered in the shared folder management table is found by the present search, the information processing apparatus checks and updates the power state of the personal computer having the shared folder in the shared folder management table to OFF if the present power state of the personal computer is set to ON. See para. [0031].

By comparison, Takahashi updates the power ON/OFF states of the multimedia devices in a state-of-connection management table based on acknowledgement messages sent from the multimedia devices rather than either present states of the multimedia devices in the state-of-connection management table or results of a comparison between a present search and a last search of folders associated with the multimedia devices. When an acknowledgement message is received,

Takahashi determines if the message is normal and accordingly records a power-on check in the power ON/OFF state of the corresponding multimedia device. Takahashi, para. [0318].

Conversely, if the message is abnormal, Takahashi records a power-off check in the power ON/OFF state of the corresponding multimedia device. Takahashi, paras. [0319]. Takahashi therefore updates the state-of-connection management table based only on whether the multimedia devices properly respond to an acknowledgement message. The updating of the state-of-connection management table in Takahashi is based neither on present states of the multimedia devices in the state-of-connection management table nor on the result of a comparison between present and past searches of folders associates with the multimedia devices, both of which are required by claim 1.

Nara and Sakata fail to overcome the deficiencies of Takahashi. The Examiner asserts that Nara discloses a search controller and a comparator that compares the results of the present search with those of a last search. The Examiner also asserts that Sakata discloses a plurality of shared folders storing image data. However, neither of these references discloses any criteria for updating a shared folder management table. Accordingly, these references do not overcome Takahashi's failure to disclose the claimed criteria for updating the shared folder management table discussed above. In particular, neither of these references discloses updating a shared folder management table based on (1) present states of the information processing apparatuses determined from the information about shared folders stored in the shared folder management table or (2) result of a comparison between shared folders of a present search with those of a last search.

Claim 1 is allowable for at least these reasons. Claim 14 recites a similar feature as claim 1 and is also allowable. Claims 1-13 and 15-22 depend from an allowable independent claim and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

Claims 23 and 24 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi in view of Nara, Sasaki and Tamura. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 23 and 24 depend from an allowable independent claim as discussed above. Tamura fails to overcome the failure of Takahashi, Nara and Sasaki to disclose the features of the allowable independent claims. Tamura is only relied upon by the Examiner as allegedly disclosing search time intervals of predetermined times and does not disclose the features of the independent claims discussed above. Claims 23 and 24 are therefore allowable.

In view of the above, this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. **325772035900**.

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